

Statement on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report

May 7, 2000

Today the FBI released new 1999 statistics showing that crime is down for an unprecedented eighth year in a row, continuing the longest decline on record. The decline in crime has reached Americans living in communities of every size and in every region across the country. Data from the 1999 FBI Uniform Crime Report show that overall crime fell 7 percent, with crime down in every category of offense. Violent crime dropped 7 percent, including an 8 percent drop in murder, and property crime fell an additional 7 percent. In 1999 there were over 8,000 fewer murders than in 1992.

This good news confirms that our anticrime strategy—more police officers on the beat, fewer illegal guns and violent criminals on the street—is having a powerful impact. We know we can turn the tide on crime, because we have. But despite this success, we cannot let up on our efforts. Gunfire continues to claim the lives of nearly 12 children every day, and we need to work on every front to reduce gun violence. With Mother's Day approaching, I will continue to urge the Congress to put the interests of America's families over those of the gun lobby and pass commonsense gun safety measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together, we can make America the safest big country on Earth.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 5 but was embargoed for release until 6:01 p.m. on May 7. It was also made available on the White House Press Office Actuality Line.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Million Mom March Organizers and an Exchange With Reporters

May 8, 2000

The President. Hello, everybody. I just finished a meeting with Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala and Chief of Staff Podesta, and I have met with all these folks, these women and their men supporters

who are the organizers of the Million Mom March. They're going to be here and in over 60 other cities on Mother's Day, marching for commonsense gun safety legislation, asking Congress to act, building on the grassroots efforts that have brought success in the petition drive in Colorado and the Legislatures of Maryland, Massachusetts, and California.

And I think what they're doing is profoundly important. We in the administration want to do whatever we can to support them. They are taking a stand for their children. Many of them have lost loved ones. They have lost children. They have lost spouses. And there will be many more just like them who are here.

They want Congress to act on the commonsense gun legislation before it, and of course, they want Congress to go beyond that to licensing, registration. They have not proposed taking away anybody's gun. They have proposed making life a lot safer for the American people and their children. And I think what they're doing is a very noble and good thing. I hope it will prompt Congress to act.

It is unconscionable—it is now over a year after Columbine and over 10 months since they've had a chance to pass this legislation. And I hope their presence here will—and throughout the country—will be successful. I am quite sure they will succeed over the long run if they stay with it, because they represent the heavy majority of the American people, and they have borne a heavy burden in their own lives which they have been willing to put into this effort. And I'm very grateful to them.

Gun Safety Legislation

Q. What's stopping Congress from acting, at least pressure from the moms——

The President. Well, we'll see if this makes a difference. I think that the people in the gun lobby have historically been very effective. But I think that if you look at the specifics of the legislation before Congress, there's a huge majority of the American people for it. And I think what all these folks are going to remind them of on Mother's Day is that they're watching, and they want action.